

Pick-a-Little, Talk-a-Lot About SJHHS's Lively Performance of "The Music Man!"  
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The Music Man follows the charismatic con artist Harold Hill, who arrives in River City, Iowa, ostensibly to form a youth marching band. Though Hill may be a fraud, he leaves a very real impact on River City, transforming the drab Midwestern community into a lively hub of color and music. At its core, The Music Man offers an exuberant celebration of music, belief, and community.

Liam Herd's Harold Hill exudes an irresistible charm. From his overexaggerated leaps and bounds across the stage in "Ya Got Trouble" to his impressive footwork in "Seventy-Six Trombones," Herd's infectious energy livens the audience as much as it does the so-called "River Citizens." Indeed, Herd's charismatic grin and gentlemanly hat tips are enough to charm even the icy Marian Paroo.

As Marian, Emma Rose Somers upholds a stiff posture and a guarded physicality to protect herself against the advances of sweet-talking men like Harold Hill. However, once Hill brightens Marian's life with brass, Somers begins to exercise a flowing, easy physicality. This, combined with her passionate embrace of Herd during "Till There Was You" helps highlight Marian's trust in Hill, even once his fraudulence is revealed.

There's never a dull moment with Gwendolyn Nishti's Mrs. Paroo. Her wild gesticulations, bright eyes, and spot-on Irish accent keep the energy high and consistently earn hearty laughs from the audience. Equally exciting is Ava Schumacher's Zaneeta Shinn, who yelps and flits about the stage with contagious, childlike ebullience.

The River Citizens tackle the difficult dance routines of "Shipooopi" and "Seventy-Six Trombones" with winning grins and invigorating enthusiasm that never deflates, no matter how difficult the combination. Summer Rice, especially, stuns with spotless fouettés and an astounding aerial that symbolizes the invigorating effects of music.

The vibrant pinks, oranges, and greens of the costumes chosen by Zoe Campbell beautifully represent the spirited River Citizens. Gio Roman's scenic art achieves much the same effect. With a sage green billiard house and a country cottage draped in lavender blossoms, Roman's designs vivify River City with color and life. Similarly, the publicity design by Izzy Bassett and Parker Bittner entices the audience with the rich reds and golds that characterize their tasteful program and posters.

Lively and light, SJHHS's interpretation of The Music Man celebrates the transformative powers of music and the joy offered by color, clarinets, and community.